

Claims

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1. An electronic program guide at a user-interface unit that enables a viewer of a first program on a first selected channel in a first category of a television-distribution network to select a next channel carrying another program in the first category, comprising:
- a) a program-guide database of times, channel numbers and categories of programs scheduled on said television-distribution network,
 - b) a controller responsive to commands from said viewer at said user-interface unit and configured to select a channel at a programmable tuner of said user-interface unit,
- said control program also reading a clock at said user-interface unit and searching said program-guide database for channels carrying programs in said first category of said first program and ordering said channel numbers of said programs to determine said next channel.
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2. The electronic program guide of claim 1 wherein said times, channels and categories of scheduled programs are received at said user-interface unit from said television distribution network.
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3. The electronic program guide of claim 1 wherein said user-interface unit displays said availability of said next program as a graphical overlay on said first selected program.

4. The electronic program guide of claim 3 wherein said control program indicates said availability of said next program at other numbered channels by displaying an indicator in said graphical overlay, said control program enabling said viewer to select said next program by issuing a command from said user-interface unit.

5. A method for enabling a viewer of a first program of any first channel of a television-distribution network to select a next channel carrying another program in the same category as said first program comprising the steps of:

- a) reading a clock and searching a program-guide database of times, channel numbers and categories of scheduled programs and determining the availability of said next channel,
- b) tuning to said next channel when said viewer selects said next channel at a user-interface unit.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein said times, channel numbers and categories of scheduled programs are received from said television distribution network.

7. The method of claim 5 further comprising the step of displaying said availability as a graphical overlay of part of said first program.

8. The method of claim 7 wherein said availability of said next program at higher or lower numbered channels is indicated by a right or left arrow in said graphical overlay and said viewer selects said next program by pressing a right or left arrow key of said user-interface unit.

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